

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 012110Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5305

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 6051

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EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: INCREASED WATER RATES

REFS: (A) STATE 218756; (B) PANAMA 5764

1. IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR, MR. VEYSEY CALLED ME FOR STATUS REPORT ON PCC PROPOSAL TO INCREASE ITS RATES FOR PROCESSING AND DELIVERING WATER TO PANAMA. I REPLIED WE ARE STILL LOOKING INTO FEASIBILITY OF PANAMANIAN USE OF OLD FUEL PIPELINE WHICH MIGHT REDUCE CONSIDERABLY PANAMANIAN INVESTMENT NECESSARY TO FURNISH WATER TO ARRAIJAN AND CHORRERA AND WHICH, IN TURN, MIGHT "SWEETEN POT" SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE NEW HIGHER RATES ACCEPTABLE TO GOP. VEYSEY KNOWS OF PROPOSAL BUT CONSIDERS THIS TO BE SEPARATE MATTER WHICH IS ONLY CONFUSING AND DELAYING RESOLUTION OF MAIN PROBLEM OF NEW RATES. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT STATE DEPARTMENT NOT DOING ITS JOB ON THIS MATTER AND REQUESTED I REPORT ANY DEVELOPMENTS TO HIM BEXORE PAN CANAL BOARD MEETING NEXT SATURDAY.

2. TODAY I INFORMED VEYSEY THAT PCC IS PREPARING REPORT ON PIPELINE TO BE PRESENTED AT MEETING NEXT FRIDAY OF TECHNICAL STEERING COMMITTEE (A JOINT US-GOP ENTITY INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF EMBASSY/PCC/SOUTHCOM AND GOP PUBLIC WORKS

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MINISTRY) WHERE WATER RATES PROBLEM HAS BEEN DISCUSSED. I

EXPLAINED THAT THIS IS ONLY FIRST STEP AFTER WHICH PRESUMABLY
GOP ENGINEERS WOULD WANT TO INSPECT PIPELINE AND THAT, MOREOVER,
PANAMANIAN WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS ON TECHNICAL STEERING
COMMITTEE COULD NOT NEGOTIATE OR DECIDE ON WATER RATES. I ALSO
TOLD VEYSEY THAT YOU AND AMBASSADOR HAD INDEED BEEN CONSULTING
ON WATER RATES PROBLEM (I HAD NOT SEEN REFTELS PREVIOUSLY)
AND THAT YOU BOTH UNDERSTOOD URGENCY OF MATTER.

3. COMMENT: VEYSEY WILL CERTAINLY RAISE MATTER AT NEXT PAN
CANAL BOARD MEETING. HE SEEMS TO FEEL THAT EMBASSY IS NOT
MEETING PROBLEM HEAD-ON AND THAT PIPELINE PROPOSAL (WHICH HE
SUPPORTS) IS SIMPLY CONFUSING AND DELAYING RATE INCREASE WHICH
IS JUSTIFIED ON ITS OWN MERITS. VEYSEY DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT
NEGOTIATING CLIMATE WOULD BE AFFECTED BY RATE INCREASE AT
THIS TIME.

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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